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Apple chip engineer returns to China, joins Fudan University amid push for talent

Kong Long left Apple after seven years, following the recent return of M4 CPU engineer Wang Huanyu to China

Ben Jiang in Beijing

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A former Apple chip engineer from China has left the US tech giant to join China's prestigious Fudan University in Shanghai, underscoring the country's efforts to attract top semiconductor talent as it seeks to bolster domestic chipmaking capabilities.

Kong Long, who spent more than seven years at Apple's California headquarters working on wireless semiconductors, has joined Fudan's School of Microelectronics as a researcher and doctoral adviser, according to his profile on the university's website. His work will focus on radio frequency integrated circuit (IC) system design, digital-analogue hybrid computing chips, and high-speed data interface ICs.

Kong's move highlights a growing trend of Chinese-born engineers returning home amid Beijing's push to develop advanced chips in the face of tightened US export controls. His appointment comes as China ramps up efforts to nurture a new generation of semiconductor experts to reduce reliance on foreign technology.

After graduating from Shanghai Jiao Tong University with a degree in microelectronics, Kong earned his PhD in electrical engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2016.

He began his career at cloud computing giant Oracle as a hardware engineer, working on mixed-signal IC designs. In 2017, he joined Apple, where he contributed to the development of radio frequency chips used in products such as the iPhone, Apple Watch and AirPods.

Kong is also a prolific researcher. His original university profile referenced 11 papers published in leading academic journals and at least 11 US patents to his name, but these were removed in later updates to the page. Fudan did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

Kong's return follows that of Wang Huanyu, another former Apple chip engineer, who recently joined the School of Integrated Circuits at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), his alma mater. Wang, who worked on Apple's M3 and M4 chips found

in the latest Mac computers and iPad Pro tablets, left the company in December after three years as an implementation engineer for central processing units.

Similar to Kong, Wang earned his PhD in the US at the University of Florida. He studied electrical and computer engineering, focusing on IC hardware and safety design and electronic design automation.

More than 10 universities in China have established an IC school dedicated to training the next generation of tech talent. These include Beijing's prestigious Tsinghua University and Peking University, whose IC faculties were both formed in 2021. HUST founded its IC school in 2023.